

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the present amendments and following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3, 6-17, 20-31, and 34-45 are pending in this case. Claims 1, 6-9, 15, 20-23, 29, 34-37, and 43-45 are amended to correct informalities and with support in the originally-filed disclosure at least at Figures 12, 15, and 17 and at paragraphs [0088], and [0109] to [0113] of the published Specification; and Claims 4, 5, 18, 19, 32, and 33 are canceled by the present amendment. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph; claims 4, 6-11, 18-25, and 32-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; Claims 1-12, 14-26, 28-40, and 42-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jacobson, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,924,686, herein “Jacobson”), in view of Sashida (U.S. Patent No. 6,788,440 B1); and Claims 13, 27, and 41 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Jacobson, in view of Sashida, further in view of Hamamoto, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,421,581 B1, herein “Hamamoto”).

Claims 4, 5, 18, 19, 32, and 33 are canceled. Thus, the rejections of those claims are moot.

In light of the amendments to Claims 1, 15, 29, and 43-45, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1-3, 6-17, 20-31, and 34-45 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, be withdrawn.

In light of the amendments to Claims 1, 15, and 29, Applicant also respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 6-11, 20-25, and 34-39 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a sheet feeding device and includes, *inter alia*, “**at least two detecting devices**, both located **between the sheet separating device and the pull-out rollers, side-by-side**, substantially in line in the sheet feeding direction and configured to detect a leading edge of the first sheet before the first sheet reaches the pull-out rollers.”

The outstanding Office Action asserts a combination of Jacobson and Sashida as teaching every element of Claim 1.

However, neither Jacobson nor Sashida teaches or suggests at least the above-quoted features of amended Claim 1. As depicted at Fig. 1 of Jacobson, only one sensor 50 is in line in the sheet feeding direction. As depicted at Fig. 4 of Sashida, sensors S1 and S2, asserted as teaching the at least two detecting devices as defined by Claim 1, are **not** “located **between the sheet separating device and the pull-out rollers, side-by-side**, substantially in line in the sheet feeding direction.” Instead, as depicted at Fig. 4 of Sashida, the sensors S1 and S2 are separated by the separating roller 261 and feed roller 221 of Sashida, which, in combination, are asserted to teach the sheet separating device as defined by Claim 1.

Because Jacobson and Sashida, taken in combination, do not fully describe all the elements of amended Claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claim 1 and Claims 2, 3, 6-12, and 14, which depend therefrom, be withdrawn.

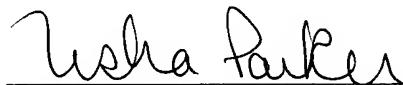
Claims 15, 29, and 43-45, though differing in scope and statutory subject matter from Claim 1, patentably define over the combination of Jacobson and Sashida for similar reasons as Claim 1. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claim 15, Claims 16, 17, 20-26, and 28, which depend therefrom, Claim 29, Claims 30, 31, 34-40, and 42, which depend therefrom, and Claims 43-45 be withdrawn.

Claim 13 depends from Claim 1, Claim 27 depends from Claim 15, and Claim 41 depends from Claim 29. Therefore, Claims 13, 27, and 41 patentably define over the combination of Jacobson and Sashida for at least the same reasons as Claims 1, 15, and 29. Further, Hamamoto, which is additionally asserted against Claims 13, 27, and 41, does not cure the deficiencies of Jacobson and Sashida with regard to the features of Claims 1, 15, and 29 deficient in the combination of Jacobson and Sashida. Thus, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) of Claims 13, 27, and 41 be withdrawn.

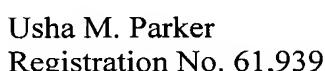
Accordingly, the outstanding rejections are traversed and the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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